



**Celebrating
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the Aruban
way!**

Page 8

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Law enforcement officers guard as protesters gather outside an ICE processing facility in the Chicago suburb of Broadview, Ill., Friday, Dec. 12, 2025.

Associated Press

Supreme Court keeps Trump's National Guard deployment blocked in the Chicago area, for now

By MARK SHERMAN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court on Tuesday refused to allow the Trump administration to deploy National Guard troops in the Chicago area to support its immigration crackdown, a significant defeat for the president's efforts to send troops to U.S. cities.

The justices declined the Republican administration's emergency request to overturn a ruling by U.S. District Judge April Perry that had blocked the deployment of troops. An appeals court also had refused to step in. The Supreme Court took more than two months to act.

Three justices, Samuel Alito, Clarence Thomas and Neil Gorsuch, publicly dissented.

The high court order is not a final ruling but it could affect other lawsuits challenging President Donald Trump's attempts to deploy the military in other Democratic-led cities.

"At this preliminary stage, the Government has failed to identify a source of authority that would allow the military to execute the laws in Illinois," the high court majority wrote.

Justice Brett Kavanaugh said he agreed with the decision to block the Chicago deployment, but would have left the president more latitude to deploy troops in possible future scenarios.

The outcome is a rare Supreme Court setback for Trump, who had won repeated victories in emergency appeals since he took office again in January. The conservative-dominated court has allowed Trump to ban transgender people from the military, claw back billions of dollars of congressionally approved federal spending, move aggressively against immigrants and fire the Senate-confirmed leaders of independent federal agencies.

The White House did not immediately respond to an email message seeking comment. In a dissent, Alito and Thomas said the court had no basis to reject Trump's contention that the administration was unable to enforce immigration laws without troops. Gorsuch said he would have narrowly sided with the government based on the declarations of federal law enforcement officials.

The administration had initially sought the order to allow the deployment of troops from Illinois and Texas, but the Texas contingent of about 200 National Guard troops was later sent home from Chicago.

The Trump administration has argued that the troops are needed "to protect federal personnel and property from violent resistance against the enforcement of federal immigration laws."

But Perry wrote that she found no substantial evidence that a "danger of rebellion" is brewing in Illinois and no reason to believe the protests there had gotten in the way of Trump's immigration crackdown.

Perry had initially blocked the deployment for two weeks. But in October, she extended the order indefinitely while the Supreme Court reviewed the case. □



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Medicaid paid more than \$207 million for dead people. A new law could help fix that

By **FATIMA HUSSEIN**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Medicaid programs made more than \$200 million in improper payments to health care providers between 2021 and 2022 for people who had already died, according to a new report from the independent watchdog for the Department of Health and Human Services.

But the department's Office of Inspector General said it expects a new provision in Republicans' One Big Beautiful Bill requiring states to audit their Medicaid beneficiary lists may help reduce these improper payments in the future. These kinds of improper payments are "not unique to one state, and the issue

continues to be persistent," Aner Sanchez, assistant regional inspector general in the Office of Audit Services told The Associated Press. Sanchez has been researching this issue for a decade.

The watchdog report released Tuesday said more than \$207.5 million in managed care payments were made on behalf of deceased enrollees between July 2021 to July 2022. The office recommends that the federal government share more information with state governments to recover the incorrect payments including a Social Security database known as the Full Death Master File, which contains more than 142 million records go-

ing back to 1899.

Sharing the Full Death Master File data has been tightly restricted due to privacy laws which protect against identity theft and fraud.

The massive tax and spending bill that was signed into law by President Donald Trump this summer expands how the Full Death Master File can be used by mandating Medicaid agencies to quarterly audit their provider and beneficiary lists against the file, beginning in 2027. The intent is to stop payments to dead people and improve accuracy.

Tuesday's report is the first nationwide look at improper Medicaid payments. Since 2016, HHS' inspector general has conducted 18 audits on a selection of



The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services building is seen, April 5, 2009, in Washington.

Associated Press

state programs and had identified that Medicaid agencies had improperly made managed care payments on behalf of deceased enrollees totaling

approximately \$289 million. The government had some success using the Full Death Master File to prevent improper payments earlier this year. □

Former Nebraska U.S. Sen. Ben Sasse reveals advanced pancreatic cancer diagnosis

By **The Associated Press**

Former Nebraska U.S. Sen. Ben Sasse, a conservative who rebuked political tribalism and stood out as a longtime critic of President Donald Trump, announced Tuesday he was diagnosed with advanced pancreatic cancer.

Sasse, 53, made the announcement on social media, saying he learned of the disease last week and is "now marching to the beat of a faster drummer."

"This is a tough note to write, but since a bunch of you have started to suspect something, I'll cut to the chase," Sasse wrote. "Last week I was diagnosed with metastasized, stage-four pancreatic cancer, and am gonna die." Sasse was first elected to the Senate in 2014. He comfortably won reelection in 2020 after fending off a pro-Trump primary challenger. Sasse drew the ire of GOP activists for his vocal criticism of Trump's character and policies, including questioning his moral values and saying he cozied up to adversarial foreign leaders. □



Sen. Ben Sasse, R-Neb., walks the halls of the Capitol in Washington, Wednesday, Jan. 19, 2022.

Associated Press



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Mexican Navy medical flight lost communication for several minutes before Texas crash

By **HALLIE GOLDEN and MEGAN JANETSKY**
Associated Press

Air traffic controllers lost communication for about 10 minutes with a small Mexican Navy plane carrying a young medical patient and seven others before it crashed off the Texas coast, killing at least five people, Mexico's president said Tuesday.

Authorities initially believed the plane had landed safely at its destination in Galveston, near Houston, before learning it had gone down Monday afternoon, Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said. A search-and-rescue operation in waters near Galveston pulled two survivors from the plane's wreckage, while one remained missing, Mexico's Navy said.

U.S. authorities are investigating the cause, but the National Transportation Safety Board said Tuesday that it could take a week or more to recover the aircraft. Four Mexican Navy officers and four civilians, including a child, were aboard the



In this image provided by Sky Decker Jr., authorities and volunteers respond to a Mexican Navy plane crash near Galveston, Texas, Monday, Dec. 22, 2025.

plane, according to the country's military. Two of the passengers were affiliated with a nonprofit that helps transport Mexican children with severe burns to a hospital in Galveston.

"My condolences to the families of the sailors who unfortunately died in this

accident and to the people who were traveling on board," Sheinbaum said in her morning press briefing, without elaborating on a possible cause. "What happened is very tragic."

U.S. Coast Guard Petty Officer Luke Baker said at least five aboard had died but

did not identify which passengers. The twin turboprop Beech King Air 350i crashed Monday afternoon in a bay near the base of the causeway connecting Galveston Island to the mainland. Emergency responders rushed to the scene near the popular beach destination

about 50 miles (80 kilometers) southeast of Houston. Sky Decker, a professional yacht captain who lives about a mile (1.6 kilometers) from the crash site, said he jumped in his boat to see if he could help. He picked up two police officers who guided him through thick fog to a nearly submerged plane. Decker jumped into the water and found a badly injured woman trapped beneath chairs and other debris.

"I couldn't believe. She had maybe 3 inches of air gap to breathe in," he said. "And there was jet fuel in there mixed with the water, fumes real bad. She was really fighting for her life."

He said he also pulled out a man seated in front of her who had already died. Both were wearing civilian clothes.

It's not immediately clear if weather was a factor. The area was experiencing foggy conditions over the past few days, according to Cameron Batiste, a National Weather Service meteorologist. □

Associated Press

Controversial '60 Minutes' segment on Trump immigration policy leaks online

By **SAFIYAH RIDDLE**
Associated Press

A controversial news segment that was abruptly pulled from the television show "60 Minutes," appears to have been leaked online this week after the last minute decision to pull the story exploded into public debate about journalistic independence.

The segment featured interviews with migrants who were sent to the notorious El Salvadorian prison called the Terrorism Confinement Center, or CECOT, under President Donald Trump's aggressive crackdown on immigration.

A recording of the story appears to have aired on the Global Television Network, which is one of Canada's largest television networks. The story appears to have been taken down, but it is

still on a website that captures and preserves webpages after they are taken down.

It is not clear how or why the story was leaked. Representatives for CBS News and Global TV did not respond to an emailed re-

quest for comment Tuesday morning, and did not confirm the authenticity of the video.

Numerous deportees in the leaked video report torture, beatings and abuse. One Venezuelan deportee featured in the leaked video

reported being punished with sexual abuse and solitary confinement.

Another deportee said guards beat him and broke his bones as soon as he arrived.

"When you get there, you already know you're in hell. You don't need anyone to tell you," he said.

The story featured numerous experts who called into question the legal basis for deporting migrants so hastily amidst pending judicial decisions.

The decision to pull the story that was critical of the Trump administration was met with widespread accusations that leadership at CBS was shielding the president from unfavorable coverage.

The journalist who reported the story, Sharyn Alfonsi, in an email sent to fellow "60

Minutes" correspondents said the story was factually correct and had been cleared by CBS lawyers and its standards division. CBS news chief Bari Weiss said Monday the story did not "advance the ball," and pointed out that the Trump administration had refused to comment for the story.

Weiss said she wanted a greater effort made to get their point of view and said that she looked forward to airing Alfonsi's piece "when it's ready."

The dispute put one of journalism's most respected brands and a frequent target of Trump back in the spotlight and amplifies questions about whether Weiss' appointment was a signal that CBS News was headed in a more Trump-friendly direction. □



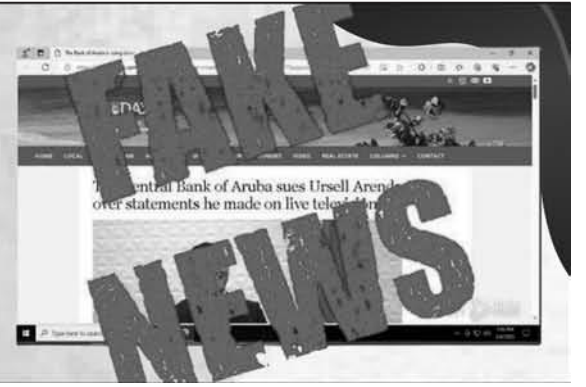
A mega-prison known as Detention Center Against Terrorism (CECOT) stands in Tecoluca, El Salvador, March 5, 2023.

Associated Press

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Sudan's prime minister takes his peace plan to the UN, but US urges humanitarian truce now

By EDITH M. LEDERER

Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Sudan's prime minister on Monday proposed a wide-ranging peace initiative to end a nearly 1,000-day war with a rival paramilitary force, but the United States urged both sides to accept the Trump administration's call for an immediate humanitarian truce.

Kamil Idris, who heads Sudan's transitional civilian government, told the Security Council his plan calls for a ceasefire monitored by the United Nations, African Union and Arab League, and the withdrawal of paramilitary forces from all areas they occupy, their placement in supervised camps and their disarmament.

Sudan plunged into chaos in April 2023 when a power struggle between the military and the powerful paramilitary Rapid Support Forces exploded into open fighting, with widespread mass killings and rapes, and eth-



Sudanese families displaced from El-Fasher reach out as aid workers distribute food supplies at the newly established El-Afadh camp in Al Dabbah, in Sudan's Northern State, Sunday, Nov. 16, 2025.

nically motivated violence. This has amounted to war crimes and crimes against humanity, according to the U.N. and international rights groups.

It seemed highly unlikely

the RSF would support the prime minister's proposal, which would essentially give government forces a victory and take away their military power.

In an indirect reference

to the truce supported by the U.S. and key mediators Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates, known as the Quad, Idris stressed to the U.N. Security Council that the government's proposal

is "homemade not imposed on us."

In early November, the Rapid Support Forces agreed to a humanitarian truce. At that time, a Sudanese military official told The Associated Press the army welcomed the Quad's proposal but would only agree to a truce when the RSF completely withdraws from civilian areas and gives up their weapons key provisions in the plan Idris put forward on Monday.

Idris said unless the paramilitary forces were confined to camps, a truce had "no chance for success." He challenged the 15 members of the Security Council to back his proposal.

"This initiative can mark the moment when Sudan steps back from the edge and the international community You! You! stood on the right side of history," the Sudanese prime minister said. He said the council should "be remembered not as a witness to collapse, but as a partner in recovery." □

Associated Press

Louvre tightens security after \$102M jewel heist, installs bars on infamous window



Workers install metal security bars over the window where thieves broke into the Louvre museum on Oct.19, Tuesday Dec.23, 2025 in Paris.

Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — A freight lift rose up on its crane Tuesday toward the Louvre Museum — but this time it wasn't jewel thieves. It was workers installing security bars on the window used to break into the Paris landmark's Apollo Gallery in October's stunning heist.

The world's most-visited museum is slowly coming to terms with security failings exposed by the theft, while investigators hunt for missing crown jewels worth \$102 million.

With the Louvre closed Tuesday, maintenance workers in security helmets and high-visibility vests mounted a freight lift to a second-floor balcony to secure new metal bars outside a now-infamous window.

The sight mirrored what happened Oct.

19, when a team of thieves posing as workers used a similar lift, then sliced through the window to enter the gallery. They grabbed tiaras, emerald earrings, a sapphire necklace and other treasures, and eight minutes later they were gone. All four suspected thieves have been arrested and charged. But the jewels haven't been found.

Samuel Lasnel of maintenance lift company Grima-Nacelles said he and his crew arrived before dawn Tuesday to carry out the high-profile window-securing operation.

"We have already worked at the Louvre on the interior, on the exterior, inside and outside the pyramid we've been here several times," he told The Associated Press. "The Louvre knows us well." □

Colombia will use drones to destroy coca crops as it grapples with record cocaine production

By **MANUEL RUEDA**

Associated Press

BOGOTA, Colombia (AP) —

Colombia will use drones to resume spraying of coca crops with a weed killer, the government announced on Monday as authorities grapple with record levels of cocaine production that have fueled tensions with the Trump administration.

The South American country banned aerial fumigation of coca crops in 2015, after the World Health Organization put glyphosate the weed killer used by spray planes on a list of carcinogens.

Justice Minister Andrés Idárraga told a news conference that the new action involving high-tech drones was approved by the government and would begin on Thursday.

He said the drones would be sent to areas where gangs and rebel groups are forcing peasants to grow coca, the primary source of cocaine. "Our security forces will be safer" that way, Idárraga added. Environmental activists had long warned that small airplanes spraying coca fields often flown by U.S. contractors were also dumping their chemicals on legal



A coca crop is visible on the outskirts of Puerto Asis, Colombia, Nov. 26, 2025.

Associated Press

crops and into streams, polluting vulnerable ecosystems and exposing villagers to contaminated water.

After suspending aerial fumigation, Colombia stepped up manual eradication campaigns, carried out by soldiers.

But the cultivation of coca expanded without aerial spraying as it became harder for the military to eradicate coca crops in remote areas, where planta-

tions are defended by drug gangs and rebel groups, and are sometimes surrounded by land mines.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime estimates that in 2024, as much as 261,000 hectares (about 645,000 acres) in Colombia were planted with coca, almost double what was planted in 2016.

According to Idárraga, the drones will fly no further than 1.5 meters (5 feet)

from their targets to ensure that water sources and legal crops are not sprayed. A single drone will be able to eradicate about a hectare of coca crops every 30 minutes. "This is a controlled and efficient" way, Idárraga said, adding that "it mitigates environmental risks." The idea of using drones to eradicate coca fields was first floated in 2018 by right-wing President Ivan Duque's administration. But

plans were delayed due to the lack of a consensus in government agencies and in Colombia's parliament. Colombia's current government, led by left-wing President Gustavo Petro, initially dismissed aerial fumigation and other forced eradication campaigns, saying it didn't want to target impoverished peasants growing coca for drug dealers because they lacked legal alternatives.

Petro's administration became more aggressive on the issue of coca crops this year as it tries to defeat rebel groups funded by the illegal drug trade that have refused to sign peace agreements with the government and that have recently stepped up attacks in Colombian cities.

The United States has long criticized Colombia's decision to halt the aerial fumigations. The Trump administration, which has accused Petro's government of not doing enough to halt cocaine production, added Colombia in September to a list of nations failing to cooperate in the drug war for the first time in almost 30 years, jeopardizing millions of dollars in military and economic cooperation. □

Ex-aide says Netanyahu tasked him with making a plan to evade responsibility for Oct. 7 attack

By **JULIA FRANKEL**

Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — A former close aide to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says that immediately following the October 2023 Hamas attack that triggered Israel's two-year war in Gaza, the Israeli leader instructed him to figure out how the premier could evade responsibility for the security breach. Former Netanyahu spokesperson Eli Feldstein, who faces trial for allegedly leaking classified information to the press, made the explosive accusation during an extensive interview with Israel's Kan news channel Monday night.

Critics have repeatedly accused Netanyahu of refus-

ing to accept blame for the deadliest attack in Israel's history. But little is known about Netanyahu's behavior in the days immediately

following the attack, while the premier has consistently resisted an independent state inquiry.

Speaking to Kan, Feldstein



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu adjusts the headphones during a joint press conference with German Chancellor Friedrich Merz in Jerusalem Sunday, Dec. 7, 2025.

Associated Press

said "the first task" he received from Netanyahu after Oct. 7, 2023, was to stifle calls for accountability.

"He asked me, 'What are they talking about in the news? Are they still talking about responsibility?'" Feldstein said.

"He wanted me to think of something that could be said that would offset the media storm surrounding the question of whether the prime minister had taken responsibility or not."

He added that Netanyahu looked "panicked" when he made the request. Feldstein said he was later told by people in Netanyahu's close circle to omit the word "responsibility" from all statements.

On Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas-led militants killed some 1,200 people in southern Israel and took 251 hostages back to Gaza. Israel then launched a devastating war in Gaza that has killed nearly 71,000 Palestinians in Gaza, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not differentiate between civilians and combatants but says around half the deaths were women and children.

Netanyahu's office called the interview a "long series of mendacious and recycled allegations made by a man with clear personal interests who is trying to deflect responsibility from himself," Hebrew media reported. □

Surf's Up: Favorite places to catch waves in Aruba

ORANJESTAD – Whether you are a salt-seasoned surfer looking for a thrill, or just looking to wet your toes in a little ocean adventure, Aruba has amazing places to learn and practice surfing!

Although more known for the calmer waters of Palm Beach, Eagle Beach and Mangel Halto, Aruba also has some special places to thrill your senses. Because of strong winds and breezes, Aruba is perfect for wind and kite surfing. You will surely notice kites in the air as you drive around the wilder, rougher areas on Aruba's east side.

There are plenty of surf shop rentals to help you with your gear, and there are also a lot of tutors if you're looking to try for the first time and need a little help. These can be found around the island, and will surely come in hand if you want to try a new experience!

With that said, here are Aruba's favorite surf spots!

Andicuri

Andicuri is recognized as the best place for body boarding. Because of the rough waves, this beach is better suited for those with more experience in surfing. However, the beach with two bluffs – one on each side – is worth a visit, if only to watch the exciting show presented by the surfers.

To go to Andicuri, you will need a 4x4 vehicle and drive from the ex-Natural Bridge Center. Alternatively, you can make it an adventure by going on a hike! The scenery is unique and beautiful on its own.

Reaching Andicuri Beach can be an adventure in itself, as it can be difficult to find and is only accessible by 4x4 vehicle or walking from the ex-Natural Bridge center, but the impressive scenery makes it all worthwhile!

Arashi

Arashi, a beach located close to the California Lighthouse, is a good spot for learning and having fun – if you're lucky! The waves at Arashi are usually calm, but with just the right weather, a swell forms attracting all the local surfers to the area.

Boca Grandi

Boca Grandi is at the most southern spot in Aruba, and is a popular spot with experienced surfers. Close to the famous Red Anchor and our beloved Sunrise City – San Nicolas, a trip to Boca Grandi can easily turn into an all-day trip to this area of the island. With a beautiful beach (although it is not allowed to swim here, because of strong currents), you can enjoy a relaxing time combing the beach for driftwood, coral,

and little crabs and snails.

Hadicurari

Here is where you will find most of the action for surfers in Aruba. With a variety of surf shops and schools in this area, you will find it easy to get in on the action. Hadicurari is also the site of the Aruba Hi Winds World Challenge, which takes place usually in June/July, and it is the largest windsurfing competition in the Caribbean!



Malmok

If you're a beginner, this is your spot. There are also various shops to rent gear and receive lessons, facilitating

learning and just trying out a new experience. The beach is also popular for paddleboarding and other water-sport activities. □

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Celebrating Christmas the Aruban way!

Christmas is right around the corner, and the Aruban community will once again celebrate the yearly festivities with family, gifts and of course food!

Christmas is probably the biggest global holiday, and every culture has its own spin on what their Christmas cuisine entails. In Aruba, our Christmas cuisine is again largely based on Latin-American influences, most notably from Venezuela.

Ayacacas and the famous pan di ham* are two crucial holiday dishes, along with stuffed turkey, roasted glazed ham topped with pineapples, arroz con pollo (rice and chicken) and potato salad, among other items.

Traditional drinks include ponche crema (Aruban eggnog), chuculati pinda (hot chocolate with peanut butter), and homemade fruit punch. Desserts include bolo di pistachio (pistachio cake), bolo

di cashupete (cashew cake), quesillo (flan), bolo preto (fruit cake), drigidek (gingerbread), pan boyo (bread cake) and more.

The Christmas dinner usually takes place on Christmas Eve, known locally as Noche Buena. Here, families from all sides reunite and enjoy the Christmas spirit till the late hours of the night. * Pan di ham: Derived from the Venezuelan Pan de Jamon (rolled up bread with ham, raisins and olives) □



Aruba to me "Christmas Edition"

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ing your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive?

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Poem by David P. Carroll *Happy Christmas Everyone.*

It's Christmas day in our beloved
Aruba today and our little children
Are smiling all day and Santa Clause
Arrived in the night with toys so colorful
And bright and Christmas lights
Are twinkling all throughout the night
Shining stars on a cold snowy night
And snow is falling soft and slow
Covering rooftops down below

And Christmas trees are big and grand
Decorated by a loving hands and
Ornaments that sparkle and gleam
Living out a childhood dream and
Christmas time is for everyone
And loving each other is number one
And Aruba is where the magical
Christmas happiness comes to life

And Christmas magic fills the air
And little children are everywhere
A time to show that you care
For love and laughter hope and light
Make this Christmas truly so bright

And we'll stop and pray for
Our loved ones who have
Sadly passed away and
There inside our heart's on
Christmas day and love and
Miss them dearly every day and
We'll give thanks to the Lord Jesus Christ

And Christmas a time for giving
And for being kind and leaving
All the worries far behind

So let the Christmas joy within you grow
And let the Christmas spirit flow
So may everyone around the world
Have a beautiful and magical
Christmas day and god bless you
And have a very happy Christmas day.

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Old Man Bramble, a Caribbean Christmas Legend

By Cdr. Bud Slabbaert

Some legends are born; others return. An old fisherman became the heart of Christmas on a small Caribbean Island. Old Man Bramble left his Island as a boy. He returned as a Legend of Light for the World. His lantern became a symbol reminding us of faith, kindness, and togetherness. A Christmas story that asks you to walk gently and tells you that you will never walk alone. Not ever.

In the year eighteen hundred and something, on the Eastern edge of the Antilles, there existed an island called Coral Cay, a modest island often left off maps, yet famous for its legends. Long before anyone called him Old Man Bramble, he was simply Bram, a young island boy distinguished by his uncommon curiosity and with questions in his heart. While other children stayed close to the shoreline, Bram stared past the horizon, wondering what might exist beyond the blue.

Upon reaching adulthood, Bram left the island aboard a merchant ship with his mother's blessing, and a small brass and glass oil lamp, that she had given him. He made a promise to his mother that he would return when the world finished teaching him. He wanted to explore the world as others chased distant places. He spent years wandering, fishing with Windward sailors and hearing tales from elders in far-off harbors. He discovered that strangers could become family and how kind-

ness travels farther than any ship. He learned that wisdom is not found in loud places, but in quiet ones. He noticed how people everywhere carried their own light, some bright, some dim, some nearly gone. And how a single light, held steady, can guide anyone through hardship. Throughout his journey, he kept his promise to never let his mother's lantern go out, even when the oil ran low.

One night, after years away, when his hair had silvered and his voice had softened, Bramble felt like the sea whispered to him, "Come home." So, he did. He returned to Coral Cay on a Christmas Eve, older, quieter, wiser, and aware that home shapes you, the world teaches you, and returning is a kind of recovery. Drawn back by a sense of home, he came not with gifts, but with purpose and guidance.

It was Christmas time once again sometime after his return. "Christmas Eve again," Bramble murmured, "The night for listening". But it became a vigil as never experienced before. A storm rose without warning, that shook people. The worst in living memory. Sea waves roared. Lanterns blew out across the island. Families huddled in darkness and fear. Then, in the dark, down at the shoreline, one light still moved. A small, steady glow. A single lantern, held by a man who walked with the calm of someone who had survived far worse. He walked as if the storm itself had

stepped aside to let him pass. It was whitebearded Old Man Bramble, bent with years, but steady as a rock. He came and carried his lantern from house to house, guiding the lost, comforting the frightened, and bringing the last stragglers to safety. He reminded the islanders of something they might have forgotten: Light is not measured by its size, but by its faithfulness. Without a single word, he showed that darkness simply lets light demonstrate its worth.

Wherever he stepped, the storm seemed to ease, as though the sea recognized him. By dawn, the storm was gone. And so was the old man. Only his footprints remained in the sand... and his lantern, glowing on a driftwood stump as if to say: "The light is yours now". From that day on, Coral Cay's elders said Old Man Bramble was sent by the Maker, and children believed he'd come back.

Today, many believe Old Man Bramble was a phantom wanderer who found his way home for good with a light others needed. But all agree on one thing: He taught what he learned himself, that even the smallest light can guide someone through hardship. His gentle strength and quiet wisdom showed power doesn't require volume, and his steady faithfulness made a lasting impact.

Every Christmas Eve, people on Coral Cay swear that they see a faint lantern light mov-



ing along the shore, steady, and full of quiet love. Families light a lantern to honor the lesson he left behind: May we walk gentle like he did. May we shine steady kindness into dark places. May we help those who feel lost and remember that no matter what storm, we never walk alone. Let our hearts be lanterns tonight, and every night to come.

Old Man Bramble always carried his lantern the way some men carry a calling, never seeking recognition. But that's why he is remembered. The world is fast paced these days. Too fast for hearts to keep up. Too loud for souls to hear themselves think. So let the old legendary fisherman Bramble remind us to appreciate simple things, especially at Christmas.

There's a light within you, that no storm can put out. You might forget it sometimes. You might hide it. You might doubt it, but it's there. The world needs your authenticity, not perfection or noise or rush, just your light. Be kind when it's easy, and even kinder when it isn't. Share what you can, your time, your smile, your patience. Forgive fast. If you ever feel lost, look for the small comforts: a warm hand, a shining star, a fresh breath you didn't know you needed. Those are lanterns too.

This Christmas, share your light quietly and faithfully with someone who needs it, just as Old Man Bramble did. The most meaningful gifts aren't wrapped—they're the ones we live and last long after Christmas.

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PSA from the Aruba Conservation Foundation: How to behave when you see a “lora”

(Oranjestad)— The conservation of the Yellow-Shouldered Amazon, also known as the ‘Lora,’ relies on how we act as humans.

We’ve seen many hikers who’ve encountered the ‘Lora’ in our protected nature areas and we can certainly imagine the pride and joy it brings to any Aruban. However, not everyone may know how to behave when encountering these clever and social birds. This guide is here to explain the behaviors that will most effectively help us in our efforts to conserve the ‘Lora.’ Please, don’t just read but also follow these guidelines so we can ensure the survival of these birds for future generations.

No interfering, please
 Please refrain from interfering with the “Lora”. The Lora is a highly intelligent and social animal, perhaps slightly too friendly because they have gotten used to the rangers as they prepared for their reintroduction. However, it is our collective responsibility to help them adapt to the wild once again. Please play your part by not interfering (calling, provoking etc.) with the Lora. Simply enjoy their beauty from a safe distance.

Be respectful and keep cats and dogs away
 Pets and strays such as cats and dogs are prone to attacking other animals, especially birds, as part of their natural instincts. Please make sure your pets are kept inside

of your yard or are kept on a leash when going out for a walk.

Do not feed them food or water
 You may think that giving the any food or water is doing a good deed, but it actually does not contribute to them developing survival skills in the wild. By interfering with the survival instincts of wild animals, we are doing the opposite of helping. Therefore, please do not attempt to give the Loras food or water.

Capturing a Lora is against the law!
 The biggest threat to the Lora before their extinction in 1947 was caused by human activities including poaching



and killing of the Lora. Let’s work collectively to prevent this from happening again. So when you see the Lora, enjoy their beauty from a distance and admire them as they flourish in the wild. □

Exploring the Mainstreet of San Nicolas

SAN NICOLAS— At Just 11 miles southeast from Oranjestad you will enter the city San Nicolas, also known as Sunrise City or Chocolate City. A city that is rich in authentic culture and island charm. San Nicolas is Aruba’s second largest city

and was once a bustling company town dominated by the oil industry since the early 1930’s.
 Over the course of four decades, its demographics had changed immensely due to a stream of Afro-Ca-

ribbean and South American workers who came to fill the jobs in the oil refinery between the 1920’s until the 1960’s. To this day traces of the multicultural influences in culinary offerings and customs, housing and population are clearly

visible in San Nicolas – more than anywhere else on the island.

Flow of history
 If you are looking for history San Nicolas has it.

The Museum of Industry is situated in the Water Tower in San Nicolas and narrates Aruba’s industrial history which began in the 19th century. Here you will learn about gold, aloe, phosphate, oil and the tourism industries which made San Nicolas once a bustling business center. Experience the touching stories of those who were part of this history.

just to name a few of the items of old-time Aruba that has been preserved. A collection of artifacts and other objects of artistic, cultural, historical, or scientific importance can be found here for the purpose of education or enjoyment.

The new San Nicolas
 In the shadow of the refinery, an art capital is quietly beginning to grow. This is the new San Nicolas, a place that is starting to become a magnet for all that is young, cool and hip in Aruba. Indeed, San Nicolas has all of the ingredients of an emerging cultural hub — varied history, interesting architecture, and, perhaps most importantly, an urban layout that makes it walkable. As you walk around, the streets are silent but the walls are loud, filled with bright, colorful murals painted by a collection of artists from around the world. □



The Aruban Cunukero: From past to present

(Oranjestad)—Aruba's culture consists of rich historical traditions that make up the Aruban identity and lifestyle. However, the life of the cunukero (farmer) is perhaps the most important aspect of our culture, in a sense representing to locals the true essence of the Aruban.

Historically, cunucus (farms) played a huge role in the early social and economic development of Aruba, and its relevance dates back to the early days of the colonization era.

Upon being discovered by Spanish conquistadors in the late 15th century, Aruba was used primarily as a ranch, housing horses and cattle brought from Europe. During the Dutch colonization era where the West Indian Company (WIC) dominated the economic sphere on the island, using the land to set up cattle farms and ranches remained popular.

Anthropologist Sidney Mintz divided Caribbean farmers back in four categories:

- The "squatters", who were mostly comprised of illegal and poor colonists, runaway slaves and deserters who took advantage of the Spanish's weak supervision on Caribbean islands like Cuba and the DR;

- Then you have "Early Yeomen", who were legal farmers who came to the west under contract. Once their contract expired, they were given a plot of land for independent use;

- Proto-Peasants were plantation slaves who were allowed to have a small piece of land to grow food for their own consumption. This was to curb the cost of living on the plantations;

- Lastly you have the "Run-away Peasantries", usually comprised of runaway slaves who acquired farming tools and cattle through stealing or through secret exchanges with other slaves from different plantations.



However, the Aruban cunukeros back then are hard to place, and their history may explain why.

From 1636 (beginning of Dutch colonization era) to before the oil industry in 1924, Aruba's population consisted of mostly farmers.

These farmers were mostly indigenous and were characterized as peasants. They weren't allowed to participate in trading, but instead were granted a piece of land to live off of.

However, in exchange for this grant, these indigenous farmers were obligated to work for the WIC, doing daily tasks such as taking care of or hunting cattle—large majority of which were destined for Curacao, clean water tanks and chop wood, among other things.

As much as these farmers were given to opportunity to live "free" with a plot of land, their exclusion from the trading and business world, as well as being deprived the chance to become real property and cattle owners, made them a unique group among Caribbean farmers at the time.

The WIC placed a lot of restrictions on these indigenous farmers—a method to safeguard their cattle deposit on the island. The indigenous farmers were mostly granted less than 7 acres of land. Those who owned bigger land were either once affiliated with the WIC or were colonists who settled on the island to try their luck at farming. In 1767, there were about 120 houses/cunucus on the island.

These Aruban farmers were also limited to the amount of cattle they could keep. Most kept goats as cattle, as only those who were affiliated with the WIC could keep (more) sheep. Of the 76 goat herders on the island, about 45 of them had less than 30 goats, and only 7 of them had more than 60 goats.

It wasn't until the WIC was defunct in late 18th century that these farmers were able to obtain more freedom as cunukeros. After 1824, the government gave these farmers official permission to keep livestock, and the obligations once placed on them were officially discarded.

Because of the dry climate in Aruba, growing food for commercial purposes was not popular. The focus was mainly on cattle herding and taking care of livestock. However, livestock need food to survive, and when Aruba experienced its duper dry climate, many farmers would see a big loss in their livestock, and hence profit.

Although the WIC at one point did try to come up with an initiative to get more people to have land on the island, the climate never really allowed real profit from farming. Because of the climate, Aruban farmers in general could not keep large quantities of livestock. At a certain point toward the end of the 18th century, the climate got so bad that many farmers decided to leave the island for a while.

For this reason, the farming economy on the island remained small. As the years went by and people noticed that these farms could not really produce any sustainable profit, farmers kept their small piece of land just to live off of. This is why

the Aruban cunukeros only played a very tiny role into the plantation economy. In modern Aruba, cunucus and cunukeros still exist on the island, fortunately with more freedom and more opportunity to tap into the agricultural market. These farmers usually sell their produce on a smaller scale, like during farmers' market events and other types of (holiday) events.

Source: "Arubaans Akkoord: Opstellen over Aruba van voor de komst van de olieindustrie (Aruban Accord: Essays on Aruba Before the Arrival of the Oil Industry)" by Alofs, Luc; Rutgers, Wim; Coomans, Henny E. red. □



CROSSWORD

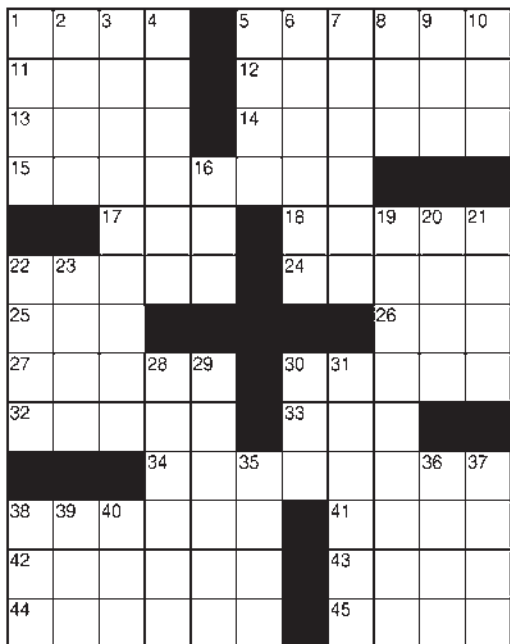
By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Tag sale
warning
5 Arrival
11 Solitary
12 Dorm sharer
13 Rescue
14 Properly pitched
15 News-paper feature
17 Stephen of "The Crying Game"
18 Deceive
22 Jitterbug's cousin
24 Supply with funds
25 Casino card
26 Hot blood
27 Exams
30 Fork features
32 Car of the '50s
33 Ball
34 Attendance figures
38 Crack, in a way
41 Gooley cheese
42 Pumpkin color
- 43 Fairy tale monster
44 Grimm boy
45 Those people

DOWN

- 1 To boot
2 Shower need
3 Scottish city
4 Ranked, in tennis
5 La Scala solo
6 Computer gizmo
7 Elect
8 Outback bird
9 Diarist Anaïs
10 Casual shirt
16 Fork over
19 Scottish city
20 Ripped
21 Has debts
22 Overdue
23 Tea type
28 Wyoming range
29 Oozy sediment
30 Cargo unit
31 Asimov book
35 Lively folk dance
36 Bike part
37 Appear
38 Cry from Homer
39 History stretch
40 Paint buy



AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

1-5 CRYPTOQUOTE

QNO LUG HEQG WUR XQL FU
BUC WURC XURLGCW. QNO
HEQG 'N BUC YRLXE.
— UCNUL HZYYZN

Cryptoquote: WINTER, A LINGERING SEASON, IS A TIME TO GATHER GOLDEN MOMENTS, EMBARK UPON A SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY, AND ENJOY EVERY IDLE HOUR. — JOHN BOSWELL

Cruise ship Schedule: Dec. 25 - 31 2025

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
THU	25	SERENADE OF THE SEAS BRILLIANCE OF THE SEAS NORWEGIAN DAWN	08.00 08.00 11.00	18.00 23.00 20.00	B C I	1 1 1
FRI	26	NORWEGIAN JEWEL CARIBBEAN PRINCESS ISLAND PRINCESS	07.00 09.00 09.00	20.00 22.00 18.00	B C I	1 1 1
SUN	28	MARELLA DISCOVERY CELEBRITY ASCENT FREEWINDS - Dept.	08.00 09.30 ****	20.00 23.00 22.30	B C E	1 1 -
MON	29	SEABOURN OVATION MARELLA DISCOVERY 2	08.00 08.00	22.00 20.00	B C	1 1
TUE	30	SERENADE OF THE SEAS NORWEGIAN SKY OASIS OF THE SEAS	08.00 13.30 08.00	23.00 22.30 23.00	B C I	1 1 1
WED	31	BRITANNIA CARNIVAL VISTA EXPLORER OF THE SEAS FREEWINDS	07.00 08.00 11.59 06.00	18.00 22.00 **** ****	B C I E	1 1 1 1

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic but important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.



Electrical power

Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.



Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 8 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.



Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occur, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

SUDOKU

To play sudoku, use logic to fill the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9 only once. Puzzle difficulty increases from Monday to Sunday.

King Classic Sudoku

9				1	8			5
7				6		8		
1								
3	7	1	9					2
			7					6
		5	1			7		9
	1	6		4		3		
	3		6					
	8			5	4			

Difficulty: ★★★

12/24

Answer to previous puzzle

3	7	8	9	1	5	6	2	4
9	5	4	6	3	2	1	8	7
2	1	6	7	4	8	9	5	3
8	4	5	2	9	6	7	3	1
7	9	1	3	8	4	5	6	2
6	3	2	5	7	1	8	4	9
1	6	9	8	2	3	4	7	5
5	2	7	4	6	9	3	1	8
4	8	3	1	5	7	2	9	6

Difficulty: ★★

12/23



This Jan. 22, 2020, file photo shows the likeness of Benjamin Franklin on \$100 bills in Dallas.

Associated Press

Should you worry about overfunding your 529 plan?

MARGARET GILES of Morningstar

529 education savings plans are powerful tools to help pay for the mounting costs of an education. Yet some people hesitate to use them.

One common concern is oversaving. You can only use 529 funds can only cover qualified education expenses without incurring a tax penalty, but it can be hard to pinpoint how much money you actually need.

Many parents open 529s for their children at birth, when there's no way to know whether their kids will earn a scholarship or go to college at all. Fortunately, parents with multiple children can change the beneficiary of a 529 plan.

But what do you do if you still have money left over after covering education expenses?

Thanks to Secure 2.0 Act, you can now roll over unused 529 fund to a Roth IRA. But the 529 rollover isn't a loophole to save extra for retirement; rules limit the conversions.

Here's what you should consider when converting 529 funds to a Roth IRA.

What are the rules for converting a 529 plan to a Roth IRA?

The Roth IRA receiving the funds must be in the name of the 529 plan beneficiary.

The 529 plan must be open for at least 15 years.

You cannot convert 529 contributions made within the past five years (or the earnings on those contributions).

The 529 funds you roll over count toward your IRA annual contribution limit. You can move a maximum of \$35,000 from a 529 plan to a Roth IRA during your lifetime.

529 funds must be converted by paying the amount directly to a Roth IRA you can't pay yourself and then deposit the money into the Roth IRA later. □

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Sta. Cruz	527 2900
San Nicolas	584 5000
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Ambulancia	911
Fire Dept.	115
Red Cross	582 2219

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Prof. Taxi	588 0035
Taxi D.T.S.	587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba	583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv.	280 2828

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American Airlines	582 2700
Avianca	588 0059
Jet Blue	588 2244
Surinam	582 7896

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Alcoholics Anonymous
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Narcotics Anonymous
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Fundacion Contra Violencia
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Centre for Diabetes
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An electric Timothée Chalamet is the consummate striver in propulsive 'Marty Supreme'

By **JOCELYN NOVECK**
AP National Writer

"Everybody wants to rule the world," goes the Tears for Fears song we hear at a key point in "Marty Supreme," Josh Safdie's nerve-busting adrenaline jolt of a movie starring a never-better Timothée Chalamet.

But here's the thing: everybody may want to rule the world, but not everybody truly believes they CAN. This, one could argue, is what separates the true strivers from the rest of us. And Marty played by Chalamet in a delicious synergy of actor, role and whatever fairy dust makes a performance feel both preordained and magically fresh is a striver. With every fiber of his restless, wiry body. They should add him to the dictionary definition. Needless to say, Marty is a New Yorker. Also needless to say, Chalamet is a New Yorker.



This image released by A24 shows Timothée Chalamet in a scene from "Marty Supreme." Associated Press

And so is Safdie, a writer-director Chalamet has called "the street poet of New York." So, where else could this story be set?

It's 1952, on Manhattan's Lower East Side. Marty Mauser is a salesman in his uncle's shoe store, escaping to the storeroom for a hot tryst with his (married) girlfriend. Suddenly we're seeing footage of sperm traveling talk about strivers! up to an egg. Which morphs, of course, into a pingpong ball.

This witty opening sequence won't be the only thing recalling "Uncut Gems," co-directed by Safdie with his brother Benny before the two split for solo projects. That film, which feels much like the precursor to "Marty Supreme," began as a trip through the shiny innards of a rare opal, only to wind up inside Adam Sandler's colon, mid-colonoscopy. Sandler's Howard Ratner was a New York striver, too, but sadder, and more troubled.

Marty is young, determined, brash with an eye always to the future. He's a great salesman: "I could sell shoes to an amputee," he boasts, crassly. But what he's plotting to unveil to

the world has nothing to do with shoes. It's about table tennis.

How likely is it that this Jewish kid from the Lower East Side can become the very face of a sport in America, soon to be "staring at you from the cover of a Wheaties box?"

To Marty, perfectly likely. Still, he knows nobody in the U.S. cares about table tennis.

He's so determined to prove everyone wrong, starting at the British Open in London, that when there's a snag obtaining cash for his trip, he brandishes a gun at a colleague to get it.

Shaking off that sorta-armed robbery thing, Marty arrives in London, where he fast-talks his way into a suite at the Ritz. Here, he spies fellow guest Kay Stone (Gwyneth Paltrow, in a wise, stylish return to the screen), a former movie star married to an insufferable tycoon ("Shark Tank" personality Kevin O'Leary, one of many nonactors here.)

Kay's skeptical, but Marty finds a way to woo her. Really, all he has to say is: "Come watch me." Once she sees him play, she's sneaking into his room in a

lace corselet.

This would be a good time to stop and consider Chalamet's subtly transformed appearance. He is stick-thin duh, he never stops moving. His mustache is skimpy. His skin is acne-scarred just enough to erase any movie-star sheen. Most strikingly, his eyes, behind the round spectacles, are beady and smaller. Definitely not those movie-star eyes.

But then, nearly all the faces in "Marty Supreme" are extraordinary. In a movie with more than 100 characters, we have known actors (Fran Drescher, Abel Ferrara); nonacting personalities (O'Leary, and an excellent Tyler Okonma (Tyler, The Creator) as Marty's friend Wally); and exciting newcomers like Odessa A'Zion as Marty's feisty girlfriend Rachel.

There are also a slew of nonactors in small parts, plus cameos from the likes of David Mamet and even high wire artist Philippe Petit.

The dizzying array makes one curious how it all came together is casting director Jennifer Venditti taking interns? Production notes tell us that for one hustling scene at a bowling alley,

young men were recruited from a sports trading-card convention.

Elsewhere on the creative team, composer Daniel Lopatin succeeds in channeling both Marty's beating heart and the ricochet of pingpong balls in his propulsive score. The script by Safdie and cowriter Ronald Bronstein, loosely based on real-life table tennis hustler Marty Reisman, beats with its own, never-stopping pulse. The same breakneck aesthetic applies to camera work by Darius Khondji. Back now to London, where Marty makes the finals against Japanese player Koto Endo (Koto Kawaguchi, like his character a deaf table tennis champion). "I'll be dropping a third atom bomb on them," he brags not his only questionable World War II quip. But Endo, with his unorthodox paddle and grip, prevails.

After a stint as a side act with the Harlem Globetrotters, including pingpong games with a seal you'll have to take our word for this, folks, we're running low on space Marty returns home, determined to make the imminent world championships in Tokyo. But he's in trouble remember he took cash at gunpoint? Worse, he has no money.

So Marty's on the run. And he'll do anything, however messy or dangerous, to get to Japan. Even if he has to totally debase himself (mark our words), or endanger friends or abandon loyal and brave Rachel.

Is there something else for Marty, besides his obsessive goal? If so, he doesn't know it yet.

But the lyrics of another song used in the film are instructive here: "Everybody's got to learn sometime."

So can a single-minded striver ultimately learn something new about his own life?

We'll have to see. As Marty might say: "Come watch me." □



Editor
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Travis Kelce's possible final home game for the Chiefs: A bittersweet Christmas showdown

By DAVE SKRETTA

AP Sports Writer

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) —

Travis Kelce has played 96 regular-season home games for the Kansas City Chiefs.

The next one might be the last.

The 36-year-old Kelce, who was chosen for the Pro Bowl for the 11th time on Tuesday, will be inside Arrowhead Stadium on Thursday night for a Christmas showdown with the Denver Broncos.

And with the Chiefs eliminated from playoff contention for the first time in a decade, and a trip to Las Vegas for their finale, it could be the last time that Kelce walks off his beloved field.

"What Travis has done to this organization, to his teammates, his coaches, this city it's special," Chiefs



Kansas City Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce waves to fans as he walks off the field after an NFL football game against the Tennessee Titans, Sunday, Dec. 21, 2025, in Nashville, Tenn.

Associated Press

offensive coordinator Matt Nagy said. "I hope like hell

that's not true. I just have so much respect for him."

Kelce has not yet announced whether he will

retire after a superlative 13-year career in which he won three Super Bowl rings and was an All-Pro on four occasions. But he has said that his decision will be made quickly after the season ends, giving the Chiefs ample time to not only prepare for free agency and the draft but their future without him.

"I'd rather just keep the focus on this team right now," Kelce said last week, "and all the conversations I have with the team and everything moving forward will be with them. And I think it's a unique time in my life, and unfortunately I know when the season ends this year. Typically we go into it and we don't know when it will end."

He's had a heck of a final season, if that turns out to be the case. □

Ravens, Broncos, 49ers and Seahawks lead the way with 6 players selected to Pro Bowl

By ROB MAADDI AP

Pro Football Writer

Six Baltimore Ravens, Denver Broncos, San Francisco 49ers and Seattle Seahawks were selected for the Pro Bowl Games.

The defending Super Bowl champion Philadelphia Eagles, along with the Dallas Cowboys, Detroit Lions and Los Angeles Chargers, are sending five players.

Reigning NFL MVP Josh Allen, Drake Maye and Justin Herbert are the AFC quarterbacks. Sam Darnold, Dak Prescott and Matthew Stafford are the QBs for the NFC.

Kansas City's Travis Kelce was selected for his 11th Pro Bowl, tied with Jason Witten for the second-most among tight ends, behind

only Pro Football Hall of Famer Tony Gonzalez (14). Nineteen players were chosen for the first time, including Eagles corner-

backs Quinyon Mitchell and Cooper DeJean, Dolphins running back De'Von Achane and Cowboys wide receiver George

Pickens. Chargers tackle Joe Alt was selected even though he played only six games before sustaining a season-ending ankle injury. The AFC South-leading Jacksonville Jaguars (11-4) only had one player selected: long snapper Ross Matiscik.

The Jets, Saints and Vikings were the only teams without a representative.

San Francisco's Kyle Juszyk is heading to his 10th Pro Bowl, the most ever by a fullback. Niners left tackle Trent Williams is the fourth offensive lineman selected to 12 Pro Bowls since 1970, joining Pro Football Hall of Famers Bruce Matthews (14), Randall McDaniel (12) and Will Shields (12).

Colts guard Quenton Nel-

son is the second offensive lineman to be selected to the Pro Bowl in each of his first eight career seasons since 1970, joining Pro Football Hall of Famer Joe Thomas (10).

Cincinnati's Ja'Marr Chase is the third wide receiver to be selected to the Pro Bowl in each of his first five seasons since 1970, joining Tyreek Hill (8) and A.J. Green (7).

Packers edge rusher Micah Parsons is the first defensive player to be named to the Pro Bowl in each of his first five career seasons since Aaron Donald (10).

Jalen Ramsey, a seven-time Pro Bowl cornerback, made it as a free safety in his first season with the Steelers. □



New England Patriots quarterback Drake Maye (10) is pressured by Baltimore Ravens safety Alohi Gilman (12) during the second half of an NFL football game, Sunday, Dec. 21, 2025, in Baltimore.

Associated Press



Christmas schedule: Cavs-Knicks, Spurs-Thunder, Mavs-Warriors, Rockets-Lakers, Wolves-Nuggets

By **TIM REYNOLDS**
AP Basketball Writer

Jalen Williams' plan for Thursday is mapped out like this: Presents in the morning, then a game in the afternoon.

To him, that sounds like an exceptional Christmas.

Williams and the defending NBA champion Oklahoma City Thunder — who felt snubbed by the Christmas schedule-makers a year ago — are on the league's slate of showcase games this year, taking on the San Antonio Spurs as part of the annual Dec. 25 quintuple-header.

The schedule, with all times Eastern: Cleveland at New York gets things started at noon, followed by the Spurs at the Thunder at 2:30, Dallas at Golden State at 5, Houston at the Los Angeles Lakers at 8 and Minnesota at Denver at 10:30.

"As a basketball player, I feel like you grow up actually, if you're a sports fan, you grow up watching sports on Christmas. To be able to be a part of it is really cool," Williams said. "What time do we play, 1:30 (Central)? Yeah, we're like the cool game. Like, 1:30, presents have already been opened and everybody's kind of watching the games. I'm really looking forward to that."

For most of the Thunder, it'll be a first: The only current Oklahoma City players who have scored in a Christmas game are Isaiah Hartenstein and Alex Caruso. And it'll be the second Christmas game for San Antonio's Victor Wembanyama, whose holiday debut last year was a 42-point, 18-rebound effort against New York.

"It's a big day for the NBA and the guys are excited to play on that slate of



Houston Rockets forward Kevin Durant, right, argues with Denver Nuggets guard Bruce Brown in the second half of an NBA basketball game Saturday, Dec. 20, 2025, in Denver.

Associated Press

games," Thunder coach Mark Daigneault said. "It's one of 82 at the end of the day, but it is an elevated circumstance because of the attention on the game and the noise around it. Those are good experiences for any team and certainly for us."

For LeBron James, it will not be a first: If he plays Thursday with the Lakers, it'll be his 20th Christmas game. That's more than 17 current franchises have played in their existence.

"I'd much rather be at home with my family," James said. "But it's a game, it's the game I love, it's a game I watched when I was a kid on Christmas Day, watching a lot of the greatest play the game on Christmas. It's always been an honor to play it. I'm going to be completely honest: I would like to be home on the couch with my family all throughout the day, but my number is called, our num-

ber is called so we have to go out and perform."

LeBron on Christmas

James playing in his 20th Christmas game means the record books will need updating once again when this holiday slate is complete.

He's already the all-time Christmas leader in games played, points (507), wins (11), field goals (180) and 3-pointers made (31, tied with James Harden).

Up next: assists, steals and free throws. James is currently second in Christmas assists with 137, eight behind Oscar Robertson. He's also second in steals with 28, two behind Russell Westbrook, and second in free throws made with 116 nine behind Robertson on that list.

James is sixth in Christmas rebounds with 143, one behind No. 5 Dolph Schayes, nine behind No. 4 Wilt Chamberlain and 12 behind No. 3 Shaquille O'Neal.

(No. 1 Bill Russell, with 176, and No. 2 Wes Unseld, with 163, are probably safe from James this year.) More about 3s

While James and Harden are tied atop the 3-pointers made list, some other familiar names could rise with big efforts on Thursday.

Dallas' Klay Thompson enters the day No. 3 on the list with 27 made 3s on Christmas, one ahead of Golden State's Stephen Curry and Houston's Kevin Durant.

Still waiting

The Christmas wait goes on for some teams.

Sacramento hasn't played on Dec. 25 since 2003, Indiana which might have gotten the nod this year if Tyrese Haliburton didn't get hurt in Game 7 of the NBA Finals hasn't made the Christmas list since 2004 and Detroit hasn't since 2005. To put that into context, it should be noted that Seattle which hasn't had a team in nearly two de-

cades played its last Christmas game in 2007, or more recently than the Kings, Pacers and Pistons have.

Orlando hasn't played on Christmas since 2011, and Chicago hasn't since 2016. Meanwhile, Boston's nine-year streak of Christmas appearances comes to an end this year.

On the other end of the spectrum, the Lakers are playing on Christmas for the 27th consecutive year and Golden State is playing on Christmas for a 13th consecutive season.

"Just excited for another big game on Christmas Day," Curry said Monday after the Warriors won their second straight to get to 15-15 on the season and go into the holiday with a bit of momentum. "The vibes are good right now."

Welcome, kid

Dallas' Cooper Flagg who turned 19 this week is set to make his Christmas debut. If Flagg plays, he'll be the fourth-youngest player to appear in a Christmas game. Kobe Bryant, Bill Wiloughby and James were all 18 in their first Christmas contest.

KD's Christmas travels

Durant is set to play on Christmas for a fifth different team (and a sixth different jersey), which makes his holiday paths one of the most traveled in league history.

Durant has also played on Christmas for Seattle and Oklahoma City, then Golden State, then Brooklyn, then Phoenix and on Thursday, the Rockets the team he joined this past summer get added to the list.

Shaquille O'Neal (Orlando, Lakers, Miami, Phoenix, Cleveland and Boston) played on Christmas for six teams. □